

Legislative Analysis



DETROIT SCHOOLS: FIRST CLASS DISTRICT

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House Bill 4047

Sponsor: Rep. Bettie Cook Scott

Committee: Education

Complete to 3-18-09

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4047 AS INTRODUCED 1-22-09

House Bill 4047 would amend the Revised School Code to modify the number of students that makes a school district a "first class" school district. Currently a school district that is so designated must have a pupil membership of at least 100,000. The bill would lower that number to 60,000.

Under the current definition, Detroit Public Schools is the only "first class" school district in Michigan. It would remain the only eligible district even with the proposed change.

In Michigan law "first class" districts operate under a different set of state regulations from all other school districts (known as "general powers" districts). The sections of the Revised School Code dealing with "first class" districts address school board composition, school board officers, school board meeting locations, board member personal interest in contacts, required annual audits, voting procedures, public communication, condemnation proceedings, bond sales, contracts, and public safety. The law also limits the creation of charter schools in such a district. There are also references in many other statutes to "first class" school districts.

MCL 380.402

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on the Detroit Public Schools and no fiscal impact on the state. The definition of a first class school district in the State School Aid Act was amended as part of the FY 2008-09 budget in PA 268 of 2008, to change the membership requirement from 100,000 to 60,000, thus avoiding any funding changes based on the current decline in DPS enrollment. However, there would likely be elections and administrative costs associated with the number of statutory changes that would occur if DPS lost first class status, but there is not enough available information with which to make an estimate of the extent of these costs.

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